DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 448 879 PS 029 104

AUTHOR Beach, Jane; Bertrand, Jane
TITLE More Than the Sum of the Parts: An Early Childhood Development System for Canada. Occasional Paper No. 12.
INSTITUTION Toronto Univ. (Ontario). Centre for Urban and Community Studies.
ISBN ISBN-1-896051-14-6
PUB DATE 2000-10-00
NOTE 58p.; Produced by the University of Toronto, Childcare Resource and Research Unit. Supported by Child Care Visions, Human Resources Development Canada.
AVAILABLE FROM Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 455 Spadina Avenue, Room 305, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2G8, Canada. Tel: 416-978-6895; Fax: 416-971-2139; e-mail: crru@chass.utoronto.ca; Web site: http://www.childcarecanada.org.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Day Care; Day Care Centers; *Early Childhood Education; Educational Policy; *Family Programs; Foreign Countries; History; *Integrated Services; National Programs; Program Design; Program Development; Public Policy
IDENTIFIERS *Canada; Family Resource and Support Programs

ABSTRACT

This paper is one of several intended to consider early childhood care and education within the context of Canada's National Children's Agenda. The paper takes the position that a blended, coherent system of early childhood development programs incorporating child care, early childhood education, and family support services should be available in every community. The current array of policies and programs in Canada is examined, and options are considered for developing the proposed system of early child development programs. The paper is organized into five sections: (1) an introduction to early child development programs; (2) the roots of early child development programs in Canada; (3) a description of existing early child development programs; (4) a discussion of dominant public policy directions; and (5) a proposed agenda for creating a system of early child development in Canada. (Contains 53 references.) (EV)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original document.

Childcare Resource and Research Unit

ED 448 879

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

CHILDCARE RESOURCE AND RESEARCH UNIT

MORE THAN THE SUM OF THE PARTS: AN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM FOR CANADA

Occasional Paper No. 12

PS 029104

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Michelle Turiano
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
1

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Centre for Urban and Community Studies · University of Toronto

More than the sum of the parts:
An early childhood development system for Canada

Jane Beach and Jane Bertrand

Childcare Resource and Research Unit
Centre for Urban and Community Studies
University of Toronto
October 2000

About the authors

Jane Beach has worked in the area of child care and social policy for more than 20 years. Over the years, she has been a centre staff and director, the workplace child care coordinator for the City of Toronto, a program and policy analyst for the Province of Ontario, a co-coordinator at the Childcare Resource and Research Unit at the University of Toronto and the Director of Child Care for the Province of British Columbia. She also conducted and co-authored two national studies on work-related child care and has served on numerous child care boards and committees.

For the last five years, Ms. Beach has worked as a child care researcher and policy consultant, involved in a broad range of activities. Most recently, she has worked with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers undertaking several needs assessments, as well as designing, implementing and evaluating child care projects for their members. She was also a researcher in the 1998 sector study of child care and co-author of the report, *Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration*, as well as two supplementary papers to the study.

Jane Bertrand is a faculty member at George Brown College in the Early Childhood Education Department. She has been on secondment for the past two years to work with Dr. Fraser Mustard, the Hon. Margaret McCain and the Ontario Children's Secretariat in the preparation and subsequent dissemination of the Early Years Study. Jane co-ordinated the research *for Our Promise to Children* (1997) edited by Kathleen Guy and was a principal researcher for the child care sector study, *Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration.*

Contents

Preface		1
Section 1	Introduction	5
Section 2	The roots of early child development programs in Canada	13
Section 3	The early child development program fragments	25
Section 4	Policy coherence	35
Section 5	An agenda for an early child development system in Canada	45
Table		18-21
References		55

Preface and acknowledgements

This paper is one of several intended to consider early childhood care and education within the context of the National Children's Agenda. The National Children's Agenda is both cross-sectoral and intergovernmental (with the participation of Health, Social Services or Human Resources, Justice, and Education authorities), a joint provincial/federal initiative. A federal/provincial/territorial working group leads the NCA.

Initiated in 1996, the NCA produced *Developing a Shared Vision* in 1999. This document set out four goals for children: physical and emotional health, safety and security, success at learning and social engagement and responsibility. In this context, in September, 2000, the First Ministers came to an agreement on Early Childhood Development services, *"agreeing on the importance of supporting families and communities in their efforts to ensure the best possible future for their children"*. Focussing on children and their families, from the prenatal period to age six, the objectives of the ECD initiative are: *"to promote early childhood development so that, to their fullest potential, children will be physically and emotionally healthy, safe and secure, ready to learn, and socially engaged and responsible; and to help children reach their potential and to help families support their children within strong communities"*. Specifically, the agreement includes $300 million ($400 million second year, $500 million third, fourth and fifth years) to pay for provincial/territorial programs including any or all of four kinds of services for children:

- healthy pregnancy,
- birth and infancy,
- parenting and family supports,
- early childhood development learning and care,
- community supports.

The National Children's Agenda and its Early Childhood Development Initiative fall within the social policy context framed by the Social Union Framework Agreement signed by the provinces (except Quebec) and the federal government in February, 1999.

This paper's contribution to public education and to the policy-making process has been made possible by Child Care Visions, Human Resources Development Canada, whose support we very much appreciate. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of HRDC.

Martha Friendly
Coordinator
Childcare Resource and Research Unit
University of Toronto

Section I

INTRODUCTION

At the end of the twentieth century, early childhood education, child care and family support services are unevenly scattered across the Canadian early childhood landscape. Although in any given day, young children and their families may experience several of these programs, there is little coordination or integration among them. Instead, parents face a dizzying array of policies, funding arrangements, eligibility requirements and types of programs. Many parents who are trying both to balance their work and family responsibilities and to meet the developmental needs of their children piece together a variety of arrangements. The nature and success of these arrangements varies by the availability of programs in the community, the parents' own financial resources and their particular work and family requirements. Children may be excluded from programs because their parents are not in the labour force, do not meet eligibility criteria or cannot afford the costs. The results are often unsatisfactory for parents and children.

Does this make sense? Could there be one integrated approach to children's programs within a coherent policy framework? Should there be? This paper takes the position that a blended, coherent system of early child development programs incorporating child care, early childhood education and family support services should be available in every community. It examines the current array of policies and programs and considers options for developing the proposed system of early child development programs. The paper is organized into five sections:

- An introduction to early child development programs;
- The roots of early child development programs in Canada;
- A description of existing early child development programs;
- A discussion of dominant public policy directions;
- A proposed agenda for creating a system of early child development in Canada.

Today a fragmented hodge podge of early childhood programs and benefits operate at the margins of education, social services and health care systems, isolated from coherent public policy, funding or planning. A range of program purposes defines different types of programs for young children, although the actual settings and activities may be identical. Children's participation in one program or another is often determined by their parent's employment status or their social-economic circumstances.

For many policy-makers, the idea that kindergarten, child care, "head start", parenting centres and family resource programs could or even *should* be integrated into the same policy framework and delivered as part of one blended program is a new and perhaps radical point of view. A novel idea, in Canada at least, but not a new one.

> *[in England] these [infant schools for young children] schools have hitherto been applied (primarily) to the amelioration of the conditions of the poor. There is no good reason however, why they should be restricted to any one class, whilst they are so well calculated for the benefit of all* (Russell, 1826, as cited in Pence, 1990, p.90).

The language may be dated, but the comment is as relevant today as it was in 1826 when it was made by William Russell, the founder and editor of the *American Journal of Education*. So is the following observation by J.J. Kelso, an Ontario civil servant responsible for children's aid societies.

> *Play is for young children an absolute necessity. It is quite impossible for them to grow up physically strong and active unless they have abundant opportunities to exercise their bodies and limbs. It is just as impossible for them to grow up morally robust and capable of habitual self-control if they are not allowed constant opportunities to play with other children* (Kelso, 1906, as cited in Young, 1994, p.29).

Another historical figure in early childhood education, William Blatz, the founder of Toronto's Institute of Child Study in 1942 once remarked that:

> *There is no question today as to the necessity of arranging for the administration of all preschool education [including nursery school and full-day programs] under the proper educational authorities — local for immediate and direct responsibility, provincial for supervision, inspection and research, and federal for subsidy and control* (Blatz, 1943, as cited in Raymond, 1991, p.195)

In fact, there have been many individuals throughout the history of our early childhood and family support programs with much more holistic visions of programs for young children and their families than generally exists in Canada today.

WHAT ARE EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS?

Child care, kindergarten, "head start" programs, nursery schools, playgroups, family resource programs, and parenting centres are all designed to meet, at least in part, families' and young children's needs. Each of these programs has its own history. Separate programs developed with different mandates — supports to parental employment, preparation for compulsory schooling, compensatory education for children at-risk, parent education, and social and peer interaction for young children. These family support programs, child care and early childhood education are all components of early childhood development programs. The Ontario Early Years Study (McCain & Mustard, 1999) and other recent reports have proposed blending these existing components to create coherent systems of early childhood development programs.

Parents, children and early childhood development programs

- Ayesha lives in downtown Toronto. She goes to kindergarten in the local public school every morning and goes home at lunchtime with a neighbour, a regulated family child care provider, who cares for five children in the afternoon. Her mother or father picks her up around 5:30 PM.

- Carmen is four months old. She lives in a small village outside Halifax. Her mother, receiving maternity/parental leave benefits, is staying at home to care for Carmen for six months. Carmen and her mother meet other parents and infants in a local church basement every Friday morning. The group grew out of a prenatal support group offered by the local public health department; each Friday, the parents set up a floor play space for the infants with equipment and play materials provided by public health.

- Simon lives in Calgary. He is three years old and goes to a nursery school three mornings a week. His father works a night shift and his mother works at the shopping mall on Thursday and Friday nights and all day Saturdays. One parent is at home with Simon all of the time except for Friday night when he stays with his Grandma.

- Carla is twelve months old and goes to a child care centre at the university where her dad works. She is often there by 8:00 am and goes home with her dad around 5:00 PM.

- Elisheva is a four-year-old who is severely brain damaged. She can sit only with support, cannot speak, and needs to be fed. For a year, she has been in a municipally-operated child care centre where a specially trained Resource Teacher provides the extra help that allows her to be part of her group. Her mother and father are both in the labour force.

- Ian's parents are both professionals working full-time. Almost every day, Ian goes to a community-based child care centre run by a parent board. His special group of friends includes Tyson, whose mom is struggling to move from welfare to work, Katie, whose parents are both autoworkers, and Liam, a psychiatrist's son.

- Jessica, who is two-and-a-half, goes with her mother and younger brother to a family resource program two or three mornings a week. Sometimes her mother stays but sometimes she will leave for a couple of hours and then come back for Jessica and her brother.

Ayesha, Simon, Carla, Ian, Elisheva, Carmen and Jessica are all in early child development settings. Although the funding, management and administration of the programs differ, their daily activities are similar. If the settings are of high quality, the children are exploring rich social and physical environments that support their healthy development.

In each of these settings, the physical environment is set up for children. Carla's infant room has a large open play area with lots of soft cushions and pillows. The wall is lined with a cruising rail for beginning walkers and there are low shelves with several bright toys for shaking, poking, pushing and pulling. Jessica's favourite time at the family resource program is the circle time, when one of the staff or a parent reads stories from picture books and all the children and parents join in songs and child-centred activities. Ayesha's kindergarten, Simon's nursery school, Ian's and Elisheva's child care, and Carla's infant room have circle time too. Simon often plays in the dramatic play centre at his nursery school; there are dress-up clothes and lots of dishes and pots and pans. Simon likes to pretend he is a

busy chef at a big restaurant. Ayesha's kindergarten looks a lot like Simon's nursery school. Her favourite place is the art easel with its fresh pots of paint each day.

In each of these settings, there are adults who both educate and care for each child as they build relationships that are both responsive and respectful to children's growing competence and abilities to cope. They make sure their needs for food, physical safety, sleep and toileting are met. These adults know that children are not isolated individuals but are part of families, and that support to those families is critically important. There are also other children to play with in each of these settings, and adults who play a role in setting the stage and encouraging the play among the children.

Children do not come to an early childhood setting merely to do their "learning". Rather, they "live" in these settings for several hours each week. Just as they are learning at home when they discover how the flusher on the toilet works or how to use simple tools to fix things or how soothing it is to hear dad's voice sing them to sleep, each hour in an early childhood setting is filled with new information and experiences.

Most one-, two-, three- and four-year-old children in Canada, however, do not have access to such high quality programs. If their families are low-income, they may be able to get a child care subsidy, and, if they are fortunate, find a space in a high quality child care program. If they are sufficiently disadvantaged, they may be able to attend one of a very few preschool programs aimed at levelling the cognitive playing field and giving them a "head start", almost always a part-day program that makes it difficult for their parents to enter or stay in the workforce. In order to participate in the workforce, many moderate-income families juggle schedules and make whatever arrangements they can afford for their children. And — unless their parents can pay — many children whose mother is not in the paid workforce have no opportunity to go to an early childhood program until their fifth year when most Canadian children have the opportunity to go to publicly-funded, half-day kindergarten.

Why are there separate approaches for child care for working parents, early childhood education for children with parents not in the paid labour force, family resource programs that support parenting, and kindergarten programs that have little to do with the places in which many of the same five-year-olds spend the balance of their day?

The current fragmentation of programs that isolates the provision of child care, early childhood education and family support programs from each other seems to be related to:

- The historical development of separate program and policy streams;
- The idea that middle-class children and children who are perceived to be disadvantaged and at (social and/or economic) risk have different early child development needs;
- The belief that responsibility for preschool-aged children is solely an individual/family responsibility;
- The use of demand side subsidies like income tax initiatives and voucher payments for social assistance recipients that isolate "care" from other early child development opportunities.

RATIONALE FOR AN EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

Two imperatives push for an inclusive, comprehensive system of early child development programs for young children and their families. First, there has been a dramatic increase in the interest in and knowledge about the importance of early experiences for young children. Societies have long acknowledged that the quality of nurturing and stimulation young children receive influences their lifelong abilities and well being. Now the neurosciences, using new technology, are providing compelling evidence to support these beliefs and observations. A clear message emerges from the integration of knowledge from the natural and social sciences. Our early experiences, for better or worse, shape the way we take in new information and react to stress, influencing how we learn and behave and how healthy we are.

Secondly, the structure of families and communities in 2000 differs dramatically from families and communities 40 or 50 years ago when most children grew up in environments where fathers worked outside the home and were the chief breadwinners, and mothers were full-time homemakers. In the mid-twentieth century, mothers, liberated from the time-consuming drudgery of housework by modern conveniences, turned to childrearing as the focus of their attention. While some children attended nursery school and many attended kindergarten, it was much less necessary to consider parents' work schedules in the development of these programs because few mothers worked outside the home. In contrast, today the majority of Canadian children grow up with two parents who both work outside the home in the paid labour force or with a sole support mother who is in the workforce.

Public policy that takes a holistic view of children's and families needs by providing blended early childhood development programs does not exist in most of Canada. The much needed programs that serve the developmental needs of children, support parenting, and which operate within hours that allow parents to work are lacking in supply, are often of poor quality, and are too expensive for most families. Unlike kindergarten programs, which have long been recognized as important for children and worthy of public support, child care is still considered largely a private responsibility, requiring parents to buy what they can afford in the marketplace. The following sections of this paper present and analyze the present situation, describe the array of services, and make proposals for the future.

THE ROOTS OF EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN CANADA

The current array of early child development programs in Canada evolved in response to a variety of circumstances and events. Some programs were intended to help the less fortunate or to address problems related to rapid immigration, urbanization and industrialization. Introduction of others was motivated by an understanding of the benefits of early childhood education experiences and their positive impact on children's development. Over the past 75 years, early child development programs have struggled with overlapping mandates and purposes as well as separate administration, legislation and funding.

THE 19TH CENTURY

The North American Infant School Movement which began in the 1820s was an early experiment in early childhood care and education (Pence, 1990; Prochner, 2000). The Infant Schools established in Halifax and other young urban centres in Canada were modelled on similar schools established by Robert Owen, a factory owner who wanted to increase the number of workers available in the local community to work in his factory in Scotland. Owen also had a strong commitment to the education of young children. The Infant Schools developed in Scotland, England and North America during the first half of the nineteenth century were early child care and education programs intended to support the education and development of the child while providing care for children while parents worked. Particularly in North America, the philosophy of the Infant Schools put forward the notion that these early education settings were beneficial to all children (Pence, 1990). But by middle of the nineteenth century, Victorian attitudes and beliefs about motherhood brought about the demise of Infant Schools in Britain and the United States (Pence, 1990), although in Canada some continued to operate into the 1870's (Prochner, 2000).

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century and continuing into the twentieth century in Montreal, Toronto and then other Canadian urban centres, crèches cared for the young children of poor women who were trying to earn a living (Schulz, 1978). Young women who found themselves alone with a child to support in urban settings used these services to care for their children while they worked, often as domestic servants. The crèches were usually provided by charitable organizations driven by the combined efforts of upper class women and private donations. The early crèches typically provided custodial care with an emphasis on hygiene and obedient behaviour.

Kindergarten programs were first introduced in Germany by Froebel in 1837. (The term kindergarten is a German word meaning "children's garden"). Froebel recognized the unique nature of the early childhood period and set out to establish an appropriate system of early education based on the principles and methods of guided play or learning through purposeful activity. Many typical early education practices such as fingerplays or circle time find their early beginnings in Froebel's kindergarten classes. The popularity of Froebel's kindergarten spread to North America and private kindergarten classes began (Corbett, 1989).

Recognizing the importance of kindergarten experiences for young children living in inner city environments, the Toronto Board of Education introduced the first Canadian public kindergarten program in 1883 (Prochner, 2000). The introduction of public kindergartens in Toronto responded to concerns about the child's environment in and out of school. Educators saw public kindergartens as an opportunity to provide early learning opportunities as well as care for preschool children (Mathien, 1990).

In 1887, Ontario became the first province to officially recognize kindergartens as part of the public school system and to begin to provide grants to schools to establish kindergarten programs for children three to seven years old (Corbett, 1989). These were usually full school-day. Attendance at the kindergarten programs was not compulsory and sometimes parent education was offered in conjunction with the children's kindergarten classes (Varga, 2000).

THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Around the turn of the 20th century, educators and policy makers began to extend their beliefs about the educational value of play for young children to older children (Young, 1994). Across Canada, local chapters of the National Council of Women promoted children's playgrounds. In Ontario, the provincial government passed legislation in 1903 that enabled municipalities to purchase land for public parks. Representatives from the school system, women's groups, child welfare organizations and the provincial government organized the Toronto Playground Association to advocate for supervised playgrounds. Similar initiatives are reported in other urban centres across Canada. During the first two decades, public funding grew for playgrounds that offered supervised play for children outside of school hours. By all reports, many of these initiatives resembled high quality school-age child care and recreation programs (Young, 1994).

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the influence of John Dewey's progressive education, the new science of psychology, the child study movement and the influence of Britain's first nursery schools shaped the history of early childhood care and education settings in Canada.

In 1926, the St. George's School for Child Study (later the Institute of Child Study) at the University of Toronto opened its doors with both a nursery school for preschool children and an early childhood teacher training program (Raymond, 1991; Schulz, 1978). The program emphasis was clearly on early education and it soon influenced crèches, day nurseries and public and private kindergartens. The St. George's School for Child Study championed the development of nursery schools as early education settings to promote optimal child development. During the 1920s, many crèche programs adopted practices to encourage children's cognitive development as well as their physical well being (Prochner, 2000; Schulz, 1978) and some developed specialized services for children with identified special needs.

Family resource programs find their early roots in turn of the century settlement houses and public health initiatives to promote maternal and child health and in early parent education and self-help groups (Kyle & Kellerman, 1998). Public health initiatives brought prenatal and well-baby clinics to communities throughout the province (Arnup, 1994). The St. George's School for Child Study also championed parent education. William Blatz, the founder of the St. George's Nursery School, began an infant-mother drop-in program and promoted parent training through his frequent lectures broadcast on CBC radio (Doyle, 2000; Raymond, 1991).

WORLD WAR II AND THE BABY BOOM

During World War II, the federal government introduced emergency legislation to establish day nurseries for children of working women, with provision for federal-provincial cost sharing. Both Ontario and Quebec entered into agreements and established preschool and school-age programs (Schulz, 1978). The Institute of Child Study provided a model of operation for the Ontario day nursery programs and directed a shortened training program for staff (Raymond, 1991; Wright, 2000).

After the war ended, the federal government stopped the cost-shared program and the Quebec government shut down all the wartime day nurseries programs (Schulz, 1978). Attempts to do the same in Ontario were met with strong resistance and a number of programs survived. However, rather than merging with the school system, they remained separate programs, with some funding from the province and municipalities operated under the authority of the 1946 Day Nurseries Act. The surviving wartime programs joined other day nurseries that had grown out of early crèches as services primarily directed at children in low-income, disadvantaged families.

The 1950's saw a dramatic rise in part-time nursery school programs for the first children of the baby boom (Schulz, 1978). They were seen as enrichment programs for children with a strong emphasis on socialization. Kindergartens for five-year-old children were now part of the public school system in much of Canada and junior kindergarten for four-year-old children had been introduced in Ontario (Mathien, 1990; Prochner, 2000).

THE TIMES 'A CHANGIN'

During the 1960s, women's participation in the paid labour force escalated and the pressure for non-parental child care began to build. The women's movement gained considerable momentum in focussing attention on women's right to equitable employment opportunities during this period, promoting support for non-parental child care as an essential support women needed to participate in paid work. Child development research on the importance of early experiences for later abilities and the growing movements to end racial segregation and poverty in the United States also pointed to early childhood care and education solutions. During this period, compensatory preschool programs and full-time day care centres emerged across Canada.

In 1966, the federal government introduced the Canada Assistance Program, which enabled federal-provincial cost-sharing for day care programs for families "in-need", or "likely to be in-need'. The initiation of the Canada Assistance Plan allowed provincial and federal spending on fee subsidies for regulated child care programs. This combined with the rapid increase in the labour participation of women with young children resulted in more child care centres.

By the early 1970's, day care centres (the term replacing day nurseries) appeared across the country, bringing together programs directed toward low-income working families and those serving a growing number of middle-income families where both parents were either pursuing further studies or employed outside the home. Regulated family child care began to be developed by social agencies and governments across Canada. Some nursery schools expanded into full-day programs. Others, including compensatory preschool programs inspired by the Head Start program in the United States, offered half-day enrichment for young children.

Throughout the 1970's and 80's, toy lending libraries and parent-child drop-in centres developed as programs separate from nursery schools, day care centres and kindergarten programs (Kyle & Kellerman, 1998). Some were aimed at high-risk families and focussed on enhancing parenting skills; others were aimed at providing informal child care providers with opportunities for peer interaction, training, and group play activities for their charges; still others were aimed at more advantaged at-home parents.

Thus, over a century or more, Canadian early childhood programs evolved as three silos: child care, early childhood education and support to parenting. Today child care centres, nursery schools and preschools operate as regulated (or licensed) programs under provincial/territorial child care legislation with limited public funding. Publicly-funded kindergarten programs are offered to most five-year-old children and some four-year-old children in the school system under the authority of provincial/territorial education legislation, usually on a part-time basis. Family resource programs do not have the same kind of regulatory framework but are shaped by the requirements of a plethora of public and non-government funding sources.

These program components rarely connect with each other, and if they do, it is more through the efforts of service providers than through intentional, coherent public policy. In this way, by the end of the 1970s, the foundations of Canada's fragmented early childhood programs were in place.

Program	Overview	Legislation	Who works in the programs	Who can access	Limitations
Kinder-garten	Universal, non-compulsory free care and education for 5-year-olds, through the education system. In most provinces programs are part-day or equivalent; in Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick they're full-day. Kindergarten for 4-year-olds in most of Ontario and in disadvantaged communities in Quebec and a few other parts of Canada.	Operates under legislation of Ministries of Education, delivered and administered by local school authorities (except in PEI where it is delivered by child care centres).	Except in the NWT, kindergarten teachers in public kindergartens require minimum of an undergraduate degree. In addition, some provinces require primary specialization, or additional teacher training.	All children who meet age requirements may attend public kindergarten.	Choice of schools may be limited. Some school boards require the child to be living in catchment area of school to attend. Schedules are not sensitive to parental employment needs.
Centre-based child care	Early childhood care and education programs for groups of children under compulsory school age. User-pay system (except in Quebec) with financial assistance available for some families who meet eligibility requirements; some start-up and operating funding may be available. Regulations, including group size, child/staff ratios, staff qualification requirements, health and safety requirements vary from province to province. Out-of-school care for children 6 – 12 years. As above, with the exception of Alberta and Quebec.	Regulated by various provincial ministries and departments, usually by ministries responsible for social services or children and families. The establishment and operation of centres is dependent on community groups, organizations, individuals and commercial enterprises. In Ontario, some centres are publicly-operated by municipal governments.	Requirements for staff vary by province from no training requirements in New Brunswick to Manitoba & Quebec where 2/3 of staff are required to have at least a two-year ECE diploma or equivalent. Across the country, there is a higher proportion of staff with credentials than is required by regulation.	Enrolment is usually based on ability to pay, or availability of, and eligibility for a fee subsidy. Primarily used by employed or student parents. Priority for subsidy may include single-parent status, employment, enrolment in a training/education program, social assistance recipient in return to work program or at-risk status.	Little or no government planning for services – establishment of centres requires willingness and ability of community groups or private individuals or businesses to initiate raise necessary funds and operate.

Program	Overview	Legislation	Who works in the programs	Who can access	Limitations
Preschool/ nursery school	Part-day, often part-week, early childhood care and education for children, between the ages of approximately two-and-a-half to five. Length of day varies, but usually less than four hours. User-pay system; limited fee subsidies available for some families in some provinces.	In all provinces except Saskatchewan and Quebec, falls under the same legislation as full-day child care, with similar regulations and requirements. Under new family policy in Quebec, centres offering nursery school care have agreed to operate under same policies and requirements as full-day programs.	Similar qualifications to full-day child care programs. Some individual centres require additional qualifications (e.g., Montessori programs).	Enrolment usually based on ability to pay, or availability of and eligibility for a fee subsidy. Some programs available to children who are disadvantaged or special needs with no fee. Programs are used by parents not in the paid labour force, as well as those who are working or studying – often combined with other forms of care.	Many single-income modest-income families who want their child to participate in an early childhood program for stimulation, enrichment and socialization cannot afford the fees.
Regulated family child care	Full and part-time care for small groups of children 0-12 in a caregiver's home. Numbers of children permitted vary from province to province (up to eight in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, including provider's own children under 12 and 13 respectively; up to five in Ontario, including provider's own under six). User-pay system, with financial assistance available for some families who meet eligibility requirements	Regulated by the same ministries and departments as centre-based care.	Few training requirements. Most provinces require first aid training and caregiver age of at least 18. PEI, Yukon & Manitoba require orientation training. Family child care agencies and family resource programs may provide training and support to individual caregivers.	User-pay system, with financial assistance available for some families who meet eligibility requirements; priority for subsidy usually consistent with centre-based care.	Similar to centre-based care.

Program	Overview	Legislation	Who works in the programs	Who can access	Limitations
Regulated family child care (cont.)	Some start-up and operating funding available for some caregivers in some provinces. Caregivers are considered either self-employed or as dependent contractors in affiliation with a family child care agency. In Quebec, family day care providers are now supervised by comprehensive community children's agencies.				
In-home care	Care provided in parent's home. Caregiver may live in the parents' home or not. Under the Live-In Caregiver Program individuals may enter the country to provide care to children, and home support to seniors and those with disabilities. They must live in the home of their employer and work for a minimum of two years at which time they may apply for permanent resident status. Type of programming for children is individually arranged between caregiver and parent.	No early childhood legislation	No requirements for most caregivers. Caregivers in the Live-In Caregiver Program are required to have completed equivalent to high school completion and have six months caregiver-related training, or 12 months paid experience in a related field.	Parents are direct employers of caregivers. Subject to provincial/territorial employment standards legislation where relevant. Fee subsidies are not generally available except in BC.	Domestic workers are excluded from minimum wage requirements in several provinces. Monitoring is the responsibility of parent.

Program	Overview	Legislation	Who works in the programs	Who can access	Limitations
Unregulated family child care	Care provided in caregiver's home. Numbers of children permitted vary from province to province (eight children including caregiver's own in Saskatchewan, two unrelated children excluding caregiver's own in BC, four in Manitoba including caregiver's own). May provide full-time or part-time care.	Does not operate under any legislation except maximum numbers of children (provincial child care legislation).	No requirements.	Fee for service arranged between caregiver and parent. BC is the only province that provides regular child care subsidies for unregulated care; however some provinces fund parents on social assistance returning to work for this form of care.	Monitoring is the responsibility of parent.
Family resource programs	Programs that offer support and resources to parents and caregivers. Includes playgroups, parenting classes, toy and resource libraries, information and referral, training workshops. Some are focussed on families considered at-risk, others are directed to the broader community.	Do not operate under any legislation. In Ontario and Newfoundland these programs are funded as part of the child care system. Most receive core or time-limited funding from some government source. Usually operated by non-profit organizations, either as stand-alone programs or as part of multi-service agencies.	No formal training requirements.	May be nominal charge for membership and/or drop-in fees. Some fee-for-service training workshops.	Some programs are targeted to specific populations.

Section III

THE EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FRAGMENTS

This section provides an overview of the various fragments of early child development programs. Unless otherwise indicated, information is drawn from *Early Child Care and Education in Canada: Provinces and Territories 1998* (Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2000). Comprehensive information is generally not available for any of the early child development programs, however, more is known about those that are legislated and/or regulated.

Kindergarten and regulated child care programs are organized with clear boundaries that are defined by provincial/territorial legislation. Family resource programs and prevention/early intervention initiatives are less defined categories that sometimes overlap. Prevention/early intervention initiatives may be delivered within kindergarten, child care programs and family resource programs. This section also outlines income support programs like vouchers and tax measures that affect access to early child development programs. Finally, Quebec's recent child and family initiatives are described. The preceeding table (pg. 18-21) summarizes this section.

KINDERGARTEN

All jurisdictions in Canada offer preschool education through the public school system in the form of kindergarten. (*Note.* Prince Edward Island has recently announced that it will fund kindergarten for the first time but the programs will continue to be delivered through child care centres.) In all jurisdictions except New Brunswick, attendance is voluntary. Publicly-funded kindergarten, like compulsory schooling, is not a user-pay program.

Most Canadian kindergarten programs are part-day and serve five-year-old children; in New Brunswick, Quebec and Nova Scotia, however, kindergarten for five-year-olds operates for the same length of day as primary grades. In Ontario, junior kindergarten is offered to four-year-old children in 68 of the 72 school district boards (McCain & Mustard, 1999). In Quebec and Winnipeg, four-year-old kindergarten programs are offered in some disadvantaged neighbourhoods and in Saskatchewan a publicly-funded preschool program is offered in some disadvantaged communities. It is estimated that more than 95% of age-eligible children attend kindergarten across Canada regardless of parental income level, employment status or family situation. In 1996, approximately 507,000 children attended public kindergartens.

CENTRE-BASED REGULATED CHILD CARE AND NURSERY SCHOOLS

Apart from kindergarten, centre-based child care and preschool/nursery school is the primary regulated or legislated early childhood program. However, unlike kindergarten, these are not universally available, and, for the most part, are not publicly-operated. (Ontario municipal governments and Quebec school boards operate some child care programs). There are approximately 330,000 regulated part-day and full-day child care centre and nursery school spaces for children 0 to 6 years old in Canada. Regulations, standards and training requirements vary considerably across jurisdictions, as do the types of services available, the ages they serve, the fees and provision of public funds. These regulated child care programs are financed primarily by user fees; limited fee subsidies are available to low-income families who meet employment, income and other eligibility requirements.

Within each province or territory (except Saskatchewan and Quebec, which do not regulate part-day programs), the requirements for full-day child care centres and part-day preschool/nursery schools are under the same legislation and are similar. Space requirements, health and safety measures, child/staff ratios and training requirements are generally the same. Full-day centres are most often used by parents who are in the workforce or attending an education or training program while preschool/nursery schools tend to be used by mothers who are not in paid employment and who choose to send their child for social and cognitive development opportunities.

Compensatory preschool programs are often both child-and parent-focused. They provide specific activities to reduce children's vulnerabilities and to increase the likelihood of success in formal schooling. They usually include a centre-based early childhood education program for the children and specific supports and services (including home visits, parent supports groups and health and social services) for other family members. These programs are sometimes called head start programs (borrowing the American name of the national Head Start program for low-income children). Compensatory preschool programs are sometimes part of a regulated child care centre or nursery school. They typically offer half-day programs (2 1/2 hours per day), two to five days a week.

At the provincial/territorial level, planning of regulated child care and nursery school programs is generally limited. With the exception of Quebec, no province or territory sets target levels of service provision. On occasion, capital, start-up funds or operating grants have been offered to stimulate community interest in starting and running child care centres or nursery schools.

REGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

Regulated family child care, introduced in the 1970s, is provided in a caregiver's home under government regulation. Today all jurisdictions have regulated family child care but regulations and methods of organization are less consistent across the country than those that apply to centre-based

programs. There are two approaches to the regulation of family child care in Canada: individual licensing by the provincial government and supervision through a licensed agency. In some jurisdictions, requirements and monitoring are minimal with few supports or resources available to caregivers. In other jurisdictions, caregivers belong to family child care agencies that monitor regularly and are offered a range of supports and regular training opportunities. Neither model has (at best) more than minimal pre-service training requirements for caregivers. Legally, family child caregivers are not considered employees. They usually receive no (or few) benefits and are not usually eligible for paid sick leave, paid vacation, maternity or parental benefits. Family child care makes up approximately 14.7% of total regulated spaces; thus, there are approximately 70,000 spaces for children 0-12 — or about 1.2% of the total 0-12 year-old population. Parents who use this form of child care tend to be employed or in training, treating it as a support to labour force participation rather than an early childhood education or child development program.

UNREGULATED FAMILY CHILD CARE

Much of the child care used by parents in the paid labour force is unregulated, not externally monitored and not funded except indirectly through income tax deductions or vouchers available to some parents. Little is known about these private arrangements including the quality of care provided or relationships to early childhood programs. Unregulated child care may be provided in the child's own home (in-own-home care) or in the caregiver's home (family child care). Caregivers providing care in the child's home may live with the family or live out. In either case, the caregiver is considered an employee of the parents. Unregulated family child caregivers (like those who are providing regulated family child care) are legally considered to be self-employed. Conditions of employment and care arrangements for in-home caregivers are negotiated directly between parent and caregiver, unless a placement agency is involved.

There are minimal requirements that pertain to unregulated family child care and in-own-home care. All jurisdictions legislate a maximum number of children who can be cared for by a family child caregiver. In-own-home providers may be covered by provincial employment standards that specify working hours and other conditions of work.

The only form of unregulated child care that requires some amount of caregiver training or experience is that which falls under the federal Live-In Caregiver Program. Under this program, caregivers from other countries may come into Canada on the condition that they work and live in the home of their employer for a minimum of two years. Often agencies facilitate the placement and provide an employer/employee contract.

FAMILY RESOURCE PROGRAMS

Family resource programs are usually family-focused; activities are oriented both to children and their families or caregivers. They provide a range of services including parent support groups, workshops for caregivers, playgroups, resource and referral, and toy and resource lending but usually their central focus is to provide support to the parent and/or caregiver. Family resource programs may be delivered in conjunction with a regulated child care program. There are approximately 2,000 family resource programs in Canada (Kyle & Kellerman, 1998).

A 1994 survey indicated that the number of family resource programs directed to high-risk families had increased over the previous decade (Williams & Kellerman, 1995). Prevention/early intervention activities, such as home visiting, developmental screening and assessment, compensatory preschool activities, parent/caregiver support groups and supplementary nutrition may be delivered to families and young children through family resource programs. Family resource programs receive funding from a variety of sources. Ontario and Newfoundland fund family resource centres as part of the child care system. The federal government's program, Community Action Programs for Children, supports family resource programs in a number of regions across Canada.

ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY PROGRAMS

Aboriginal communities may have access to the programs identified above. In addition, there are two specific Aboriginal programs: First Nations and Inuit Child Care, and Aboriginal Head Start.

First Nations and Inuit Child Care

Until the mid 1990's, due to lack of agreement about which level of government was responsible for funding, and under what conditions, the supply of early childhood development programs for First Nations communities was very limited in most provinces. There are, however, some exceptions. Ontario has had funded child care and nursery school programs on-reserve for many years under the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement through the Federal Indian and Northern Affairs Department; these have always been included and regulated under the Ontario *Day Nurseries Act*. In 1991, the province of Alberta reached an agreement with the federal government for funding on-reserve child care, and in 1994, British Columbia extended grant and fee subsidies to on-reserve populations under the same conditions as other child care programs. Both territories license and fund child care for First Nations and Inuit communities.

As part of the 1993 Liberal Party Red Book commitment to child care, dedicated funds were announced to develop child care for First Nation's communities to a level comparable to the rest of the population. Agreement was reached among the federal government, the Assembly of First Nations and the group representing Inuit women, Pauktuutit, for the creation, improvement, administration and

operation of a total of 6,000 child care spaces through child care centres and family child care. As part of this process, some First Nations communities are developing their own standards and training requirements. The child care funding arrangements that had previously been established through Indian and Northern Affairs have continued.

The federal government committed $72 million for the first three-year development, start-up and operating period, and $36 million annually in ongoing funding for the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Program, an average of $6,000 space (through Human Resources Development Canada). This initiative is promoted primarily as a support to parental employment though, unlike other centre-based child care programs for working parents, it will not be operated on a user-pay basis.

Aboriginal Head Start

Unlike the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative, the Aboriginal Head Start program was developed to provide services to aboriginal children not living on reserve. It was not conceived as a support to parental labour force attachment but as a culturally-appropriate early childhood development program. Like the First Nations Child Care Initiative, it is 100% funded by the federal government but through Health Canada rather than Human Resources Development Canada. The Aboriginal Head Start programs are not specifically exempted from provincial licensing requirements but they have not been required to be licensed even if they meet the definition of nursery school. However, some have chosen to become licensed.

Approximately $62 million was allocated to this program from 1994-1998. In 1998, the federal government extended the Aboriginal Head Start Program to on-reserve First Nations communities.

INCOME PROGRAMS

The federal government is generally responsible for income security programs and the taxation system that has a direct impact on family income. Three income programs are related to early child development programs and the demand for those programs: maternity and parental benefits through Employment Insurance, the Child Care Expense Deduction and the National Child Benefit (NCB). In addition, all of the provinces have some payments for child care for social assistance recipients as part of "workfare" programs.

Other income-related measures, such as the taxation of family income, are also important dimensions of Canada's family policy package. However, the discussion here will take into account only the federal income policy instruments that contribute to resources for early child development.

Maternity and parental benefits and leaves

Maternity and parental benefits provide some eligible parents with limited financial support while they are away from work following the birth or adoption of a child. Eligible parents may receive 55% of their insurable earnings up to a maximum of $413 per week providing they meet the eligibility requirements of the federal Employment Insurance Act.

Since maternity and parental benefits fall under the Employment Insurance Act, those who are self employed or do not have sufficient hours of work to qualify do not have access to any paid time at home with their new child unless they are in receipt of social assistance. Individuals who work for large employers may have access to further payments under a collective agreement or other employment contract. Some contracts provide for top-up maternity payments up to 93% of an employee's previous earnings, payment of the two-week waiting period and sometimes, similar arrangements for parental leave. Jobs with such provisions are often at the higher end of average wage rates, resulting in the situation that those who earn the least often are not able to afford to stay home for very long. The federal government has announced that it will be extending maternity and parental benefits to 52 weeks, effective January 1, 2001.

Leave provisions are guaranteed within provincial/territorial employment standards. The provinces/territories have relatively consistent maternity leaves: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Quebec allow an 18-week unpaid leave, the other jurisdictions 17. However, the length of parental leave (for new mothers and fathers) varies considerably from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, from none, to 52 weeks unpaid leave for each parent. The eligibility requirements for accessing both maternity and parental leave also vary considerably by jurisdiction. Given the current instability in the job market, a woman may find it more difficult in some provinces to meet the minimum length of continuous service with the same employer in order to be granted a leave, even though she may have the number of hours of work necessary to receive the benefits.

The Child Care Expense Deduction

The Child Care Expense Deduction allows working parents with receipted child care expenses to deduct up to $7,000 per year from the earned income of the parent with the lower income. For years, this measure has been criticized as both providing a disproportionate benefit for higher earning families and by treating child care as a market commodity; it makes child care more affordable for those who have the purchasing power to buy it. It does not increase the supply of child care nor does it offer any guarantee of quality (Friendly, 1994).

Approximately one-third of caregivers in the unregulated sector provide receipts that permit parents to take advantage of the deduction (Cleveland & Hyatt, 1997). Cleveland suggests that the possibility of losing the spousal exemption or receiving reduced social assistance or EI payments may be reasons for not declaring the income, and therefore, not providing receipts to parents.

Recipients of Employment Insurance benefits are not able to access the Child Care Expense Deduction. They may be unable to look for work, go to job interviews, or perform volunteer labour that may make them more employable, without child care. In many jurisdictions, a person who becomes and remains unemployed for any length of time is not eligible for a child care subsidy, and either has to remove the child from a program or pay the full fee.

In 1995 the cost to the federal government for this deduction was approximately $320 million, and a rough estimate of the cost to the provinces was $160 million (Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 1997).

The National Child Benefit

The 1997 federal budget announced a new child benefit that combined the existing child tax benefit and the Working Income Supplement to increase federal child benefits for low-income families. As part of the federal/provincial/territorial agreement that established the NCB, provincial governments can reduce their benefits to children in families who are receiving social assistance thus offsetting the increase in federal child benefits. The provinces must then reinvest the resulting savings in other programs for children in low-income families (Battle & Mendelson, 1999). Six provinces used some of their "reinvestment" envelope for regulated child care services in 1999; these provincial expenditures made up 5% of the total reinvestment funds (Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services, 1999).

Payments for child care for social assistance recipients

Most provinces and jurisdictions provide vouchers or allowances for child care, usually targeted to social assistance recipients. Funding of this type may include those in welfare-to-work programs, and those enrolled in the former Employment Insurance-sponsored retraining programs for which the (federal) Dependent Care Allowance was provided.

QUEBEC

At the present time, there is one example of an emerging early child development system in Canada. The Quebec government has initiated a coherent system of early childhood centres that complement existing pre and postnatal and family support programs offered through community health and social service centres.

In 1996, the government announced a new family policy and subsequently created the Ministry of Families and Children. A centrepiece of the Quebec family policy is a plan to make early childhood care and education child care available to all families for a maximum fee of $5/day, regardless of family income or employment status (for very low-income families, there is an additional subsidy). In September 1997, publicly-operated kindergarten programs for five-year-olds were extended to full-

day. Early childhood care and education was extended to four-year-olds through early childhood centres at $5/day. In September 1998, this was extended to three-year-olds, and by the year 2001 is intended to be available to all children for whom space is available. A plan for expansion is an on-going part of the Quebec policy.

The family policy also includes a plan to extend maternity and parental benefits to self-employed individuals, and to raise the benefit level to 75% of earnings. This plan has been on hold pending the outcome of discussions with the federal government regarding the use of Employment Insurance funds.

Section IV

POLICY INCOHERENCE

The fragmentation of early child development program components in Canada can be attributed, in part, to the absence of public policy coherence. Early child development policy directions are incoherent because they often contradict one another and conflict with the consistent message from the biological and social sciences that an early child development system would benefit young children. Policy incoherence contributes to the creation of isolated and overlapping program fragments that are not available or accessible to the majority of young children and their families.

This section examines five policy dichotomies that illustrate the incoherence:

- Universality versus targeting;
- Stay at home versus go to work;
- Integration versus isolation;
- Top down versus bottom up;
- Child care versus child development/early childhood education.

Universality versus targeting

Policies for some early child development programs, such as kindergarten offered within the school system, support universal access and availability. Policies for other programs set out a prescribed set of eligibility criteria that target initiatives such as regulated child care fee subsidies or "head start" preschool on the basis of family income level, parent employment status or presence of developmental challenges. Research evidence points to the value of universal programs for all young children and their families (McCain & Mustard, 1999).

During the past two decades, the term at-risk has been used to label children and families who face various challenges or risks, particularly those who are economically disadvantaged. Findings from child development research conclude that early intervention, including family support initiatives and early childhood education, can help ameliorate the negative impact of physical, psychological, social and economic challenges (Campbell & Ramey 1994; Karoly, Greenwood, Everingham, Hoube, Kilburn, Rydell, Sanders, & Chiesa, 1998; Schweinhart, Barnes, & Weikart, 1993; Zigler, 1990).

This research has been used to rationalize the idea that early childhood services should be targeted to at-risk populations. Thus, many new early childhood initiatives over the past decade such as the federal government's Community Action Program for Children, Ontario's Better Beginnings, Better Futures initiative and Saskatchewan's pre-kindergarten programs have been targeted.

There are several difficulties with this targeted approach to early child development. First it is difficult to identify who is actually at-risk. Research tells us that a focus on only those who are identified as at-risk will often leave out the majority of people who would benefit from a particular program or intervention. For instance, low-income is one risk marker that is often used to target access to

early child development programs. But in a recent Canadian survey, the greatest number of children with emotional and behavioural problems were not from low-income families (Offord & Lipman, 1996). Proportionately, while children living in moderate-income and wealthier families were less likely to experience problems than their lower income counterparts, there were still more than 20% of children from moderate and wealthy families who had reported difficulties. Thus, family support and early childhood care and education programs targeted only to low-income children miss most of the children who might benefit.

This relationship between family socio-economic status and child development outcomes, including health status, cognitive ability and social skills has been called a "gradient" (Keating & Hertzman, 1999). This means that while at each step up the socio-economic ladder there is a declining number of children who are having difficulties, there are still significant numbers of children with difficulties in the most affluent families. This is consistent with the socio-economic gradient found in adult mental and physical health status and literacy and numeracy skills (Hertzman, 1999).

A second objection to early childhood programs that are targeted to disadvantaged groups is that they segregate and stigmatize children and families. Targeted programs that identify at-risk children, families or communities label them as having a deficit. Not only is this objectionable from a human rights perspective but there is evidence that children do better in inclusive, not segregated settings. As Lero (1998) notes:

> *separate service streams for early childhood for welfare purposes and for other programs for other children result in continuing segregation by class and race in many communities, are expensive, and inevitably result in less sustainable, poorer programs over the longer term.* (p.450)

Third, there is substantial research that shows that early childhood development programs benefit all young children, not only those who are at-risk (Doherty-Derkowski, 1995). In Canada, kindergarten for five-year-olds is based on the idea of universal accessibility but policies for most early childhood programs available before the age of five, set eligibility criteria that restrict access on the basis of family income level, parent employment status or presumption of at-riskstatus. Paradoxically, however, research evidence points to the value of early childhood programs for all young children before their fifth year (McCain & Mustard 1999). Why, then, does Canadian public policy recognize the value of an early child development program for all children at age five years but limit access to programs only to specific children at ages one to four years?

It is also true that many children face some difficulties at least some of the time, and most parents face some challenges some of the time. Thus, it makes the most sense, and seems most efficacious and fair to provide opportunities for all children through universal core services while recognizing the need to target additional support to those who need it within a universal system.

Stay at home — go to work

Another policy paradox is about mothers of young children and workforce participation. Public policies for income support and child care funding seem to encourage low-income, lone-parent mothers with young children to go to work. At the same time, however, income support and child care policies encourage modest-income mothers to stay at home. Finally, the Child Care Expense Deduction provides an advantage for mothers with high incomes who go to work. Michalski (1999) suggests that these contradictory messages are related to Canada's underlying ambivalence about how best to balance work and family life as well as concerns about fostering dependency through social programs.

Child care fee subsidies are geared to assisting low-income families to participate in the labour force. In addition, governments in several provinces penalize single parents, mostly mothers, who are social assistance recipients if they are not prepared to seek paid employment while specially targeted child care vouchers or subsidies may be made available to them. But even these public policies to encourage mothers with young children who are social assistance recipients have inherent contradictions. Research evidence points to a lack of quality child care as a major barrier to exiting social assistance and entering the workforce (Cleveland & Hyatt, 1996; KPMG, 1999) and shows that some provincial subsidy programs disadvantage single low-income mothers more than couples (Doherty, Rose, Friendly, Lero, & Irwin, 1995). Thus, provincial governments are not adequately ensuring that child care is available to support even to support the group most encouraged to be in the workforce — mothers with young children who are exiting social assistance.

On the other hand modest-income families are usually ineligible for a subsidized child care space in a regulated setting yet cannot afford the full fees (Thompson, Maxwell, & Stroick, 1999). The Child Care Expense Deduction may be of little value to them for two reasons:

- if the parents are using unregulated child care arrangements, either the caregiver will not issue a receipt or the caregiver's fees will be higher to cover the additional costs of reporting the income and paying income tax;
- the actual cash value of the deduction is low for most two-parent and lone-parent modest-income families. Child care expenses must be deducted from the lower income in a two-parent family. The income tax brackets of lone-parent and two-parent families earning modest incomes is low; therefore the deduction amounts to only a fraction of the actual cost.

Thus, for the most part, modest-income parents receive little support in accessing child care arrangements that allow them to participate in the labour force. Fee subsidies are not available to them, their child care costs are high, and they benefit little from the Child Care Expense Deduction. Generally, policies encourage one parent, usually the mother, in two-parent, modest-income families to stay at home with preschool children while the Expense Deduction encourages mothers in higher income families to work outside the home.

Coherent public policy would promote all children's access to early child development programs while ensuring that the programs are structured to be sensitive to parental labour force participation.

Integration versus isolation

Provincial governments frequently attempt to reorganize early child development programs to promote the integration of early child development initiatives. Yet the same governments are, in fact, maintaining regulations, legislation and funding mechanisms that entrench the isolated service silos that present significant barriers to the actual integration of early child development programs.

Several provinces have given a higher cabinet profile to child and family issues and have brought together prevention and early intervention programs with an intention to better co-ordinate service planning and delivery (Thompson et al., 1999).

- British Columbia, Ontario, Alberta and Quebec have named Ministers with responsibility for children to Cabinet;
- New Brunswick has a coordinated system of early intervention services;
- Ontario has recently expanded its provincial Office for Integrated Children's Services to include child welfare services, child care and specialized children's services in addition to public health and early intervention initiatives;
- BC integrated responsibilities from six separate ministries into the Ministry of Child and Family and established 11 regional authorities to coordinate services. Child care was then reorganized into another new Ministry, Social Development and Economic Security;
- Manitoba has a Child and Youth Secretariat that coordinates early intervention initiatives with other programs.

However, at the service delivery level, little real progress has been made in integrating the dominant service silos with each other. Budget allocation and service delivery of regulated child care programs remain separate from other early child development programs including kindergartens and prevention/early intervention activities.

Kindergarten programs within the school system almost always remain within the education sector infrastructure. Although these programs are universal for all children, those who attend kindergarten for part of the day may attend licensed child care as well. These have different staffing requirements, separate requirements regarding the physical environment and are only available to families who can afford the fee for service or who are eligible for child care subsidy. Other kindergarten-aged children are in informal care arrangements, attend recreational programs or are left on their own for several hours each day. Professional and labour affiliations and agreements further entrench this aspect of policy incoherence.

While there is emerging consensus that policies must move beyond efforts that coordinate services at the level of the bureaucracy to those that deliver real integration or blending of funding, regulation, planning and service delivery, there are few Canadian examples of initiatives that actually create holistic or seamless environments for young children and their families.

Top-down versus bottom-up

Top-down policies are developed and directed by various levels of governments. Bottom-up policies emerge from grassroots activity and are based in local communities. Many bottom-up policies develop in response to the absence of overarching or comprehensive government policies. Just as governments across Canada are promoting the integration of early child development initiatives while continuing to support isolated program delivery systems, they are also promoting contractory top-down/bottom-up policies.

Lisbeth Schorr, a well-known child advocate and social policy in the United States, comments on three different national commissions in that country to design an early childhood development model:

> *the more we learned about the complex and varied needs around the country, and the impressive, if spotty and fragmented, efforts now under way to meet them, the less confident we became that we could come up with one model for nationwide local implementation"* (Schorr, 1997, p. 241).

However, to many it is unclear how this bottom-up approach can build a coherent, equitable system of early child development. It is difficult for local or community-based early child development programs to be sustainable if they are not operating within a broader framework. This bottom-up approach seems to encourage a piecemeal approach to funding that does not lend itself to the type of stable base of quality early child development programs needed to offer reasonable working conditions to staff, support to parents, and high quality care and education to young children. No country has ever developed a comprehensive system of early child development without strong central leadership, policy, funding and control.

Since the early 1980's, Canadian child care advocates have called for a national child care program as part of a comprehensive family policy with clear, direct federal leadership (Bertrand, 1993; Friendly, 1994, 2000). The advocates have called for a national program with objectives, conditions and funding that allowed for provincial/territorial variations. Provincial/territorial legislation was to be consistent with the national program, and implementation was to be the responsibility of a local authority. The intention was not a monolithic or cookie-cutter approach in which families were expected to have the same needs or children would experience the same environments. Local diversity and parental choice were always integral to the proposal. But nevertheless, this approach did look to a national vision, initiation and direction, an over-arching policy framework and to public funding from the senior levels of government.

Governments, at all levels, have frequently changed structures used to develop and deliver early child development and family support services, reflecting divergent top-down and bottom-up policies. Over the past twenty-five years there have been numerous efforts to centralize and consolidate versus efforts to decentralize and devolve authority to develop and deliver early child development and family support programs. These reorganization initiatives, like the integration of policy, legislation

and service delivery discussed earlier, take up considerable energy, resources and attention. They often appear to be a response to the need for governments to "do something" (Thompson et al, 1999).

Now in Canada there seems to be a clear government trend to decentralize responsibility and authority, downsize public services and privatize activities (Thompson et al., 1999). In some instances provincial/territorial and the federal government have withdrawn from their responsibilities to fund or deliver children's and family programs. However, local governments and voluntary community groups often find themselves caught. They may be given the responsibility to deliver specific children's services but must operate within the regulatory requirements of the provincial or territorial governments. For instance, in Ontario, the responsibility for the delivery of child care programs (including family resource programs) has devolved to forty-seven municipal areas (Consolidated Municipal Service Managers). At the same time, the provincial government has centralized more responsibility for the school system. The funding has shifted from local property taxes to provincial general revenues. The top-down provincial funding formula for schools is forcing many child care programs out of their school space. The local municipal governments, now responsible for child care, and local school boards do not have the funding authority to work together to accommodate early years' programs that are responsive to local needs.

The bottom-up approach to policy for early years' programs becomes a seductive path to those who value and support locally-driven initiatives as the most responsive to individual community needs and diversity. However, there are two difficulties with this. First, communities are usually only given pieces of authority for policy and funding. Second, communities are complex environments, with many interests and voices. Individual interests can dominate and reduce equitable access to programs.

Many interpret the recommendations of a recent report delivered to the Ontario government as a call for community-led early child development and parenting centres that will arise out of each community's own capacity and resources (McCain & Mustard 1999). However, the recommendations also call for a provincial framework that removes the barriers now inherent in centralized provincial systems and integrates legislation, funding mechanisms and planning. The recommendations actually point to the development of a better fit between top-down and bottom-up policies.

Child care versus child development/early childhood education

An apt observation that is a basic premise of quality early child development programs is that "good care educates and good education cares." But Canadian public policies have usually treated child care and early childhood education as two separate strategies.

Today provincial/territorial and federal governments actively promote the value of early child development activities for young children. They have established numerous early child development initiatives that are designed to enhance children's development and parents' ability to support their child's development. Most of these occur during regular work hours and do not provide non-parental care that is sensitive to labour market demands. In Saskatchewan, the guidelines for the prekindergarten

compensatory program within the school system, even state that it is "not day care". Similarly, Health Canada's Community Action Program for Children does not fund "child care" activities but does offer funding for "child development" or compensatory early education initiatives.

Some Canadian public policies support — directly and indirectly — unregulated non-parental child care — private, fee-for-service arrangements between parents and individual caregivers. These include the Child Care Expense Deduction for working parents and vouchers for parents who are receiving social assistance and participating in back-to-work programs. These policies do not consider whether or not the custodial care arrangements they often purchase support optimal early child development — yet the children being "looked after" may be the very children at whom early compensatory child development or "head start" programs are aimed.

Few parents think of kindergarten as child care but as education. Yet as the introduction to this paper illustrated, the programming and activities in a kindergarten class are very similar to those in a high quality child care program — both tend to be play-based and are designed to support the cognitive growth and development of the child. Working parents often have great difficulty juggling the kindergarten component of their child's day with other arrangements yet do so in the belief that the educational component of kindergarten is more beneficial to the child than would be the stability of one program. Conversely, during the 1997 teachers' strike, the Ontario government reimbursed parents $40/day for incurred child care expenses. While the primary purpose of school may be "education" this demonstrated a clear understanding that many parents rely on the school system to care for their children while they work. Thus, it is clear that early childhood development programs can serve more than one purpose.

In summary what should be noted about each of these public policy dichotomies is that, in fact, none is really a dichotomy. While the needs of stay-at-home mothers have been pitted against the needs of mothers in the labourforce, and a top-down approach to public policy has been discussed in opposition to the bottom-up model, in fact, good public policy would encompass a range of mother's needs and policy approaches. Analysis of "the best policy mix" for children and families suggests that both core universal services and components appropriately targeted to specific children, families or communities are essential. Perhaps the most puzzling dichotomy is the care vs. early childhood education split. While, as we discussed in Section 2, the origins of this dichotomy originate in the 19th century history of programs for children, it is not clear why there has been such resistance in Canada to blended care and education programs.

The challenges to overcoming these five policy dichotomies are integral to new public policy that truly meets the needs of children and families. These will be addressed in the next section.

When Canada first established itself as a nation, the value of education to individuals and to society of education was recognized. It was obvious that most individual families were unable to provide the opportunities that allow children to attain the necessary educational outcomes. Slowly, independent one room schools supported by communities and private schools for the wealthy evolved into a public education system (Brown, 1996). By the end of the 19th century, the public education system ensured that all children aged seven to twelve years had the opportunity to attain an education necessary to meet society's needs (Gaffield, 1982). Today, public education is compulsory from ages five or six years to 16 or 18 years.

Over the same time period, private colleges and universities for the wealthy evolved into a publicly-supported post-secondary education system that now includes universities, community colleges and technical institutions. Post-secondary education opportunities are publicly-funded and are now widely available to Canadian youth to prepare them for participation in the labour force and citizenship in a democratic society.

As Canada enters the 21st century, a situation similar to that of public and post-secondary education in the 19th century exists for early childhood development services. It is now time to build a system that knits together the program fragments described in this paper and ensures that every child has the opportunity to attain optimal early childhood development outcomes that are appropriate to his or her abilities.

Although families have the primarily responsibility for their own children, there is wide agreement that they need systematic support from society as a whole. A the same time, the design of an early childhood development system assumes the existence of other systems of support: an equitable taxation and income support system, a quality physical and mental health care system, expanded maternity and parental leave benefits, and effective child welfare systems.

A vision for Canada

Canada needs an integrated early childhood development system that provides community-based programs for all children and their families. This system would be a first tier of support for the period of development from conception to six years that is followed by public schooling and post-secondary education. A coherent early childhood development system would pull together the fragments of early childhood education, child care and parent/caregiver support services and initiatives described in this paper. These early childhood development programs would be flexible enough to meet diverse family needs and exquisitely sensitive to diverse cultural and linguistic values and practices.

A remarkable level of agreement exists about this vision for an early childhood development system. In the past two years, a number of policy reports have put forth recommendations illustrating this support:

- *a holistic approach to children requires the removal of artificial barriers and the collaboration of all groups serving children. To this end the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada is urged to do the following:*
  state their support for coordinated and integrated approaches to preschoolers and their families;
  encourage ministries of education to be involved in the coordination of preschool services to children;
  encourage ministries, in addition to education, to work together to provide community-based services to preschool children;
  support research into how successful holistic preschool education is accomplished. (Canadian Schools Boards Association, 1998, p.9).

- *learning begins at life and is lifelong. Those who are responsible for education within schools must of necessity be concerned with preschool education provided by parents, teachers and child-care providers.* (Canadian School Boards Association, 1998, p.2).

- *a long-term policy objective for ensuring better outcomes of young children could be achieved through an integrated package of comprehensive systems of supports and services for children, prenatal to school entry, and their families, within every community* (Health Canada, 1999, overview and summary)

- *... three "pillars" that all communities would have and would deliver in an integrated way. These services would provide early childhood education; they would provide "care" while parents are doing something else; and they would provide different kinds of supports for parenting such as: information on how to be a better parent, home visiting, parent-child drop-in programs... A universal national program would have a variety of program types but they would be integrated — family daycare, centre-based programs, part-day programs, extended hours ... Families wouldn't have to cart the children from place to place to get education over here, then child care over here, and then go for parenting over here...it would be a much more holistic approach* (Friendly in Atkinson, 2000, pp. 1-2)

- *The major thrust of the Early Years Study's recommendations is the establishment of a network of early childhood development and parenting centres that are available and accessible to all children and their parents. The centres would integrate and build on the capacity of programs now operating in communities throughout the province, including child care centres, family child care, nursery schools, junior and senior kindergarten programs, parenting and family literacy centres, family resource programs, and peri-natal programs* (McCain & Mustard, 2000, p. 1).

- *Establish a federally-financed national child development fund to invest in provincial and community social infrastructures for parents and children (e.g., early childhood development, child care, employment supports)* (Battle & Mendelson, 1999, p.1)

- *Effective parenting can be supported through ...improved access to health and developmental programs as well as community resource centres, and enhanced availability of developmental child care and preschool for both employed and stay-at-home parents. Communities can provide supportive environments for children through access to reliable education, health, social, and recreational services, by providing integrated delivery for all of these services, by creating "child friendly" spaces and systems, and by collaborating across sectors to promote better outcomes for all children* (Jenson & Stroick, 1999, p. 2)

- *Children in all circumstances can benefit significantly from a range of early childhood development initiatives that foster their physical, social and intellectual development during the formative early years... A mounting body of research provides substantial evidence that such measures enhance children's growth and development along multiple dimensions — physical, emotional, social, linguistic and intellectual.* (Battle & Torjman, 2000, p. 2)

THE OPPORTUNITY

A convergence of circumstances bodes well for a major social policy initiative to launch an early childhood development system in Canada. As noted earlier, there is a growing consensus about two things: first, the importance of the early period of human development, and, second, the need to realign and expand early childhood development programs to support young children and their families.

In Canada, provincial and territorial governments are responsible for many of the key programs for children and families such as health, education and social services. The federal government is responsible for income support and pension programs, including maternity and parental benefit provisions within Employment Insurance. However, in many areas both the federal and provincial/territorial governments become involved. While health, social services and post secondary education are organized and managed by the provinces, the federal government has historically had a funding and related policy role. In some instances, both federal and provincial/territorial governments are involved in activities that seek to enhance children's well-being and healthy development. As noted in Section III, Health Canada funds community-based child and family programs that may duplicate or overlap with provincial/territorial child care or prevention/early intervention initiatives.

Recent initiatives such as the National Children's Agenda, National Child Benefit and Social Union Framework Agreement offer the opportunity for more co-operative federal-

provincial/territorial relations (Thompson, et al., 1999). This allows agreement on broad outcomes and directions, while allowing provinces/territories, local governments and communities flexibility to try different approaches:

- In February 1999, the federal, provincial and territorial governments (excluding Quebec) signed the Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA). SUFA now sets the parameters for Canadian social policy. It contains general principles, a mobility provision and commitments to increase government's transparency and accountability to constituents.

- The National Child Benefit (NCB) was implemented on July 1, 1998. It includes the basic Canada Child Tax Benefit, a low-income supplement, and provincial reinvestment commitments. It is viewed as an example of collaboration between the federal and provincial governments. The federal government provides the basic benefit and provinces are permitted to deduct the amount from social assistance recipients and "reinvest" the savings in additional low-income supplements or in child and family services.

- The federal government and the provinces/territories have taken significant steps toward agreement on Early Childhood Development as part of a National Children's Agenda (NCA). The NCA is focused on children's issues from preconception to age 18 (It should be noted that Quebec agrees with the objectives of the NCA but is an observer, not a full participant in this initiative).

- In the October 1999 Speech from the Throne, the Prime Minister called for a federal-provincial-territorial *"plan ... consistent with the Social Union Framework Agreement. [That] will set out common principles, objectives and fiscal parameters for all governments to increase resources and further strengthen supports for Early Childhood Development (ECD)"*(p. 6) by *December 2000.* Such an agreement is intended to build on previous commitment to the National Children's Agenda.

- At the 2000 Annual Premiers' Meeting, although health care was the top priority item for discussion and received the majority of the media attention, Early Childhood Development was a key agenda item as well. The Premiers issued a communiqué indicating the broad outlines of their support.

- Intergovernmental collaboration on the Early Childhood Development strategy is expected to be a major agenda item at the annual First Ministers' Conference in September, consistent with the December deadline.

The opportunities to harness the potential to create a framework for integrated early childhood development programs are real — so are the challenges. Right now there are numerous points of activity but they operate independently, and are often in competition with each other. The challenge of how to knit these together and expand their capacity into an early childhood development system requires the participation of all levels of government, local communities, businesses, and voluntary groups.

What the federal government can do

The new federal-provincial/territorial arrangements codified in the Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA) now demand that Ottawa and the provinces/territories work together as partners and that dual participation is required for any new initiative. This is a fundamental change from the federal government's previous role in developing social programs such as health care, pension plans or employment insurance. In the past, the federal government was "first among equals by virtue of its spending power that allowed it to shape provincial social programs" (Battle & Torjman, 2000, p. 7).

Under SUFA, there are four specific ways in which the federal government's involvement is crucial to the evolution of national early childhood development programs:

- participation with the provinces and territories to create a framework agreement with national principles, targets and timetables;
- provision of an early childhood development fund to assist development of provincial/territorial programs;
- support for research and development;
- encouraging the development of an excellent early childhood workforce.

Early Childhood Development Policy Framework

The federal government can support an overarching policy framework for an early childhood development system designed in partnership with the provincial and territorial governments. Each province or territory could establish its own service infrastructure and determine the operating framework for early childhood development programs in that jurisdiction.

The overarching framework should be based on knowledge available from current practice and research to create environments for young children that are effective in supporting optimal early development within the context of today's social and economic realities. While the federal government cannot dictate the terms of such a framework to the provinces and territories, SUFA suggests that the appropriate mechanism be for the two levels of government to develop a set of principles to guide the use of funds.

Principles

Guiding principles based on best knowledge available from practice and research could include:

- *Comprehensiveness*

Early Childhood Development programs must be child- and family-focused. They must provide three basic components: early childhood education, child care and parenting/caregiving support. Comprehensive early childhood development programs would meet the needs of all young children and parents who are at home as well as those who participate in the paid labour force.

- *Universally Available*

Universal availability means that all families have the opportunity to enroll their children in early childhood development programs. This opportunity is not blocked by prohibitive financial costs or targeted eligibility requirements although affordable fees may apply. It does not mean, however, that all children are required to attend early childhood development programs.

- *Accessibility*

Accessible early childhood development programs means the inclusion of all children, regardless of aptitude, ability or disability. There may be additional services or specific programs for targeted groups, based on identified socioeconomic, biological or psychological risk or need. Parents may be required by pay an affordable fee according to their income.

- *Integrated*

Integrated early childhood development programs would create holistic environments for young children and their families. They would combine the existing program pieces across education, social services and health sectors. They would also combine programs and resources from federal, provincial and local governments.

- *High Quality*

Provincial and territorial governments would establish standards that reflect current knowledge and understanding of child development and optimal health and safety practices.

- *Accountability*

Early Childhood Development programs would be accountable to governments and the public for finances, administration and performance. This will require ongoing collection of basic data, monitoring and periodic evaluation of outcomes and operational processes.

- *Community Delivery*

Presuming that locally delivered programs are most likely to be sensitive to community cultural values and geographic realities, the design of early childhood development environments, the allocation of resources, and the delivery of programs should rest with a local authority in communities.

Older Children?

An early childhood development system needs to be able to connect to the public education system and to community programs that provide recreation, cultural activities and child care to children outside of school hours. While the focus of this paper is on the early years (conception to age six), it does not reflect a dismissal of the needs of school-age children for quality environments that enhance emerging skills and independence.

Early Childhood Development Fund

The federal Early Childhood Development Fund could be a transfer to the province/territory or it could be transferred directly to communities to develop programs that are consistent with the federal/provincial/territorial framework. There are at least three possible mechanisms to facilitate the transfer of federal dollars into community-based early childhood development programs:

- The federal government could match the combined total from provincial/territorial contributions and parent fees/community resources. The early childhood development program pieces that the federal government currently delivers (CAP-C, Literacy Secretariat grants for family literacy activities, and Military family resource programs) could be folded together with existing provincial and community initiatives as part of the total resource base available.
- A separate block fund transfer mechanism, a designated fund similar to the National Children's Benefit, could be used to transfer federal funds to provincial/territorial governments for community-based early childhood development programs. The provinces would be eligible for the funds if they implemented an early childhood development system that met the broad framework of principles outlined in the federal-provincial/territorial agreement. The province/territory would then transfer the combined funding directly to individual early childhood development programs or to local early childhood development authorities (a local government or a local intersectoral group).

- An alternative funding mechanism would be to transfer federal and provincial/territorial contributions directly to communities. Both levels of government would transfer funds to a local authority recognized by the provincial/territorial government. The local authority would be responsible to allocate the combined federal and provincial resources to plan and deliver community-based early childhood development programs. This would be similar to the current use of CAP-C grants in the province of Quebec.

The Social Union Framework Agreement includes the possibility that the federal government may make direct contributions to community-based early childhood development organizations or local intersectoral groups that are taking responsibility to deliver integrated early childhood development programs in their communities. Under the terms of the SUFA, the federal government must give at least three months' notice and offer to consult before introducing any new Canada-wide initiatives that are supported through direct transfers to organizations.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Costs and Benefits of an Early Childhood Development System

The total cost of an early childhood development system that meets the principles outlined above is likely to be about $10 billion, or approximately $5000 per child (Cleveland in Atkinson, 2000). Parents, charitable organizations and governments are already spending several billion dollars for the current array of programs and services. Based on estimates of current expenditures in early childhood development programs, at least three billion dollars annually is spent by parents and governments for child care and early childhood education initiatives excluding kindergarten (Cleveland & Krashinksy, 1998; Cleveland in Atkinson, 2000).

What are the fiscal returns for investing in early childhood development? This is a difficult calculation. A recent Canadian cost-benefit analysis estimates a $2 return for every $1 spent on quality child care for children two to five years (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 1998)

Research and Development

The federal government's leadership in research and development remains an important element of an early childhood development system. It could co-ordinate a research agenda and funding for research that build on existing initiatives such as Child Care Visions, the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, the National Centres of Excellence, and the new Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being. Sustained research and development initiatives can do much to assist in the construction and maintenance of a national early childhood development system. In fact, research and development initiatives will be essential to ensure the public accountability promised under the Social Union Framework Agreement.

Early Childhood Workforce

Children need responsive nurturing and challenging opportunities. Individuals who are knowledgeable about child development and skilled in early childhood education practices are more likely to be responsive to young children and to provide environments that promote exploration, problem-solving and learning (Helburn, 1995; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1989). Infants and young children also need to be cared for by someone who is consistent and reliable (Howes, 1990; Rubenstein & Howes, 1979). From the child's point of view, frequent changes in staffing reduce stability and create anxiety. Early childhood development work environments can be organized to create conditions that reduce staff turnover (and staffing changes). Reasonable salary levels and benefits, including pension plans, are associated with lower staff turnover and higher staff qualification levels (Doherty, Lero, Goelman, LaGrange, & Tougas, 2000; Whitebook et al., 1989).

The federal government cannot directly determine early childhood development work environments or even the qualification requirements for the workforce. However, it can indirectly support and encourage a stable, competent workforce. Of course, additional federal funding is likely to support improved compensation. The federal government can also create and support a forum for early childhood staff from across Canada to make connections with each other and share information about

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

education and training. The Child Care Sector Study begun in 1996 and the subsequent Child Care Human Resource Round Table are two initiatives that the federal government has supported and have served to bring together people who are working directly with young children and their families. Both initiatives have transcended provincial/territorial boundaries and service delivery environments and allowed people who work in home-based and in centre-based settings with children and their families to come together. Continued federal government support will lead to common standards of practice, transferable preparatory and in-service education programs, and a shared identity as an early childhood workforce.

The challenges

The challenge is to transform the early childhood development vision we share into action. Communities and provincial/territorial governments are important players but the federal government has to get the ball rolling if an early childhood development system is to emerge.

In January 2000, Member of Parliament John Godfrey (Liberal, Don Valley West) summarized the challenge the federal government faces:

> *The role of the federal government is, first, to take an active leadership role in reaching the right deal with the provinces on a national action plan by December, 2000. In collaboration with the provinces, the federal government has to ensure that the principles, objectives, and outcome measures are sufficiently well defined to create a real national program, without intruding on provincial jurisdiction or stifling community energies and initiative. The federal government has to put enough money on the table initially to convince the provinces it is serious and to lay out a further five-year funding framework once the agreement is signed* (Godfrey in Atkinson, 2000, p. 2).

The February 2000 federal budget reiterated the commitment to negotiate an agreement with the provinces and territories by December 2000. It also increased the National Child Benefit and expanded Employment Insurance's maternity and parental leave benefits.

There are two significant challenges to moving forward from here. They must be met before the momentum for change is lost and early childhood development drops away again. First, without the incentive of a sizeable federal financial contribution, it will be difficult to convince the provinces to negotiate an agreement that matches the vision before the December 31, 2000 deadline. And, second, while there is clear agreement on a broad vision, much less agreement exists on the immediate actions and structure of an early childhood development system. A clear and coherent plan for implementation with targets and timetables is essential. A strong show of political leadership from the federal and from at least a few provincial/territorial governments is critical to a successful agreement on an early childhood development system — and then to its implementation.

But political leaders are often much better at leading parades once they are created than they are at creating the parade in the first place. If an action plan with immediate steps towards

implementation of an early childhood development system can be brought forward that captures the wide support of Canadians, the public support can motivate political will for sustained government action. Thus, an action plan for a Canadian system of early childhood development programs must be inclusive enough to bring in a broad and vocal chorus of support united in the conviction that it is time to begin to meet the needs of all Canadian families and children.

References

Arnup, K. (1994). *Education for motherhood.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Atkinson Letter (2000). *Universal early childhood developmental services: Time for action – Part 2.* January 21, 2000. Toronto: Atkinson Charitable Foundation.

Battle, K. & Mendelson, M. (1999). *How to do a children's budget and a tax cut budget in 2000.* Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Battle, K. & Torjman, S. (2000). *Ottawa should help build a national early childhood development system.* Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Bertrand, J. (1993). *Employers, unions and child care.* Toronto: Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

Brown, C. (Ed.). (1996). *The illustrated history of Canada.* Toronto: Lester Publishing Limited.

Campbell, F. & Ramey, C. (1994). Effects of early intervention on intellectual and academic achievement: A follow-up study of children from low-income families. *Child Development, 65*(2), 684-698.

Canadian School Boards Association. (1998). *Preparation for learning: Preschool education – Draft discussion paper for CMEC third national forum.* Toronto: Council of Ministers of Education, Canada.

Childcare Resource and Research Unit. (1997). *Child care in Canada: Provinces and territories 1995.* Toronto: University of Toronto, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

Childcare Resource and Research Unit. (2000). *Early childhood care and education in Canada: Provinces and territories 1998.* Toronto: University of Toronto, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

Cleveland, G. & Hyatt, D. (1996). *Child care, social assistance and work: Lone mothers with preschool children. Working Paper W-96-2E.* Ottawa: Human Resources Development Canada, Applied Research Branch.

Cleveland G. & Hyatt, D. (1997). Assessing federal child care policy: Does the arrow reach its target? *Policy Options, 18*(1), 20-24.

Cleveland, G. & Krashinsky, M. (1998). *The benefits and costs of good child care.* Toronto: University of Toronto, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, Childcare Resource & Research Unit.

Corbett, B. (1989). *A century of kindergarten education in Ontario.* Mississauga: The Froebel Foundation.

Doherty, G., Lero, D., Goelman, H., LaGrange, A., & Tougas, J. (2000). *You bet I care! A Canada-wide study on: Wages, working conditions, and practices in child care centres.* Guelph, Ontario: University of Guelph, Centre for Families, Work and Well-being.

Doherty, G., Rose, R., Friendly, M., Lero, D. & Irwin, S. (1995). *Child care: Canada can't work without it.* Toronto: University of Toronto, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

Doherty-Derkowski, G. (1995). *Quality matters: Excellence in early childhood programs.* Don Mills: Addison-Wesley Publishers Ltd.

Doyle, P. (2000). Who cared? Images of the past. *Interaction 14*(2), 20-27. Ottawa: Canadian Child Care Federation.

Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services. (1999). *The National Child Benefit progress report: 1999* (Catalogue No. MP43-395 / 1999E). Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Friendly, M. (1994). *Child care policy in Canada: Putting the pieces together.* Toronto: Addison-Wesley Publishers Ltd.

Friendly, M. (2000). *Child care and Canadian federalism in the 1990s: Canary in a coal mine.* Toronto: University of Toronto, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

Gaffield, C. (1982). Schooling, the economy, and rural society in nineteenth-century Ontario. In J. Parr (Ed.), *Childhood and family in Canadian history* (pp. 69-92). Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.

Government of Canada. (1999). *Building a higher quality of life for all Canadians: Speech from the Throne to open Second Session of the Thirty-Sixth Parliament of Canada* [October 1999]. Ottawa: Author.

Health Canada. (1999). *The early child development system and its program components* (version 3 — Discussion Paper July 1999). Ottawa: Author.

Helburn, S. (Ed.). (1995). *Cost, quality and child outcomes in child care centres: Technical report.* Denver, Colorado: University of Colorado, Center for Research in Economic and Social Policy.

Hertzman, C. (1999). Population health and human development. In D. Keating & C. Hertzman (Eds.), *Developmental health and the wealth of nations* (pp. 21-40). New York: Guilford Press.

Howes, C. (1990). Can the age of entry into child care and the quality of child care predict adjustment in kindergarten? *Developmental Psychology 26*(2), 292-303.

Jenson, J. & Stroick, S. (1999). *A policy blueprint for Canada's children issues.* Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks.

Karoly, L., Greenwood, P., Everingham, S., Hoube, J., Kilburn, R., Rydell, P., Sanders, M., & Chiesa, J. (1998). *Investing in our children: What we know and don't know about the costs and benefits of early childhood interventions*. Santa Monica: RAND.

Keating, D. & Hertzman, C. (Eds.). (1999). *Developmental health and the wealth of nations: Social, biological and educational dynamics*. New York: Guilford.

Kelso, J.J. (1906). *Supervised playgrounds*. [Pamphlet in Settlement House Papers - Metro Toronto Reference Library, Toronto].

KPMG National Consulting Services. (1999). *Ontario Works in Toronto: An operational review*. Toronto, Ontario: Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Kyle, I. & Kellerman, M. (1998). Case studies of Canadian family resource programs: Supporting families, children and communities. *Interaction, 12*(1), 28-30. Ottawa: Canadian Child Care Federation.

Lero, D. (1998). Can a re-evaluation of early childhood care and education policies be an empowering force for the 21st century? In J. Hayden (Ed.), *Landscape in early childhood education: Cross national perspectives on empowerment* (pp. 445-457). New York: Peter Lang.

Mathien, J. (1990). *School programs for young children in Ontario and Toronto*. Unpublished manuscript.

McCain, M. & Mustard, F. (1999). *The early years study: Reversing the real brain drain*. Toronto: Ontario Children's Secretariat.

McCain, M. & Mustard, F. (2000). *The early years study: The business case*. Toronto: Founders' Network.

Michalski, J. (1999). *Values and preferences for the "best policy mix" for Canadian families*. Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks.

Offord, D. & Lipman, E. (1996). Emotional and behavioural problems. In *Growing up in Canda: National longitudinal survey of children and youth* (pp. 119-126). Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

Pence, A. (1990). The child care profession in Canada. In I. Doxey (Ed.), *Child care and education: Canadian dimensions* (pp. 87-97). Toronto: Nelson Canada.

Prochner, L. (2000). A history of early education and child care in Canada, 1820 – 1966. In L. Prochner & N. Howe (Eds.), *Early childhood care and education in Canada* (pp. 11–65). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Raymond, J. (1991). *The nursery world of Dr. Blatz*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Rubenstein, J. & Howes, C. (1979). Caregiving and infant behaviour in day care and in homes. *Developmental Psychology 15*(1), 1-24.

Schorr, L. (1997). *Common purpose: Strengthening families and neighbourhoods to rebuild America.* New York: Doubleday.

Schulz, P. (1978). Day care in Canada: 1850 – 1962. In Ross, K. (Ed.), *Good day care: Fighting for it, getting it, keeping it* (pp. 133-158). Toronto: The Women's Press.

Schweinhart, L., Barnes, H.V., & Weikart, D.P. (1993). *The significant benefits: The High/Scope Perry preschool study through age 27.* Ypsilanti: High/Scope Press.

Thompson, S., Maxwell, J. & Stroick, S. (1999). *Moving forward on child and family policy: Governance and accountability Issues.* Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks.

Varga, D. (2000). A history of early-childhood-teacher education. In L. Prochner & N. Howe (Eds.), *Early childhood care and education in Canada* (pp. 66–95). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Whitebook, M., Howes, C. & Phillips, D. (1989). *Who cares? Child care teachers and the quality of care in America: Final report of the National Child Care Staffing Study.* Berkeley, California: Child Care Employee Project.

Williams, E. & Kellerman, M. (1995). *1994 status report on family resource programs across Canada.* Ottawa: Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs.

Wright, M. (2000). Toronto's Institute of Child Study and the teachings of W.E. Blatz. In L. Prochner & N. Howe (Eds.), *Early childhood care and education in Canada* (pp. 96-114). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Young, N. (1994). *Caring for play: The school and child care connection.* Toronto: Exploring Environments.

Zigler, E. (1990). Foreword. In S. Meisels & J. Shonkoff (Eds.), *Handbook of early childhood intervention* (1st ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press.

ABOUT THE CHILDCARE RESOURCE AND RESEARCH UNIT

The Childcare Resource and Research Unit at the Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, is a policy and research oriented facility which focuses on early childhood care and education. CRRU provides public education and policy analysis; consults on child care policy and research; publishes papers and other resources; maintains a comprehensive resource collection and computerized catalogue; and provides online resources and research through its website (www.Childcarecanada.org).

Occasional Paper Series

- No. 1 Child Care for Canadian Children and Families: A Discussion Paper
- No. 2 Proceedings from the Child Care Policy & Research Symposium
- No. 3 Work-Related Child Care in Context: A Study of Work-Related Child Care in Canada
- No. 4 Rural Child Care in Ontario*
- No. 5 Child Care: Canada Can't Work Without it
- No. 6 A Sociological Examination of the Child Care Auspice Debate
- No. 7 The Great Child Care Debate: The Long-Term Effects of Non-Parental Child Care
- No. 8 Theorizing Political Differences in Toronto's Postwar Child Care Movement
- No. 9 Neo-Conservatism and Child Care Services in Alberta: A Case Study
- No. 10 How Should We Care for Babies & Toddlers?An Analysis of Practice in Out-of-Home Care for Children Under Three
- No.11 Child Care and Canadian Federalism in the 1990's: Canary in a Coal Mine

Other Publications from the Childcare Resource and Research Unit

- A Survey of First Year Early Childhood Education Students
- Assessing Community Need for Child Care (Guide & Sample Questionnaire) *
- Flexible Child Care in Canada: A Report on Child Care for Evenings, Overnight & Weekends, Emergencies and Ill Children, and in Rural Areas
- Child Care Policy in Canada: An Annotated Bibliography
- Child Care in Canada: Provinces and Territories 1995
- Early Childhood Care and Education in Canada 1998: Provinces and Territories
- The Benefits and Costs of Good Child Care: The Economic Rationale for Public Investment in Young Children

Fact Sheets and Summaries

- Child Care Vouchers: What Do We Know About Them?
- What Does Research Tells us about Quality in Child Care?
- Public Policy Context of Child Care: The Issue of Auspice
- Quebec's New Family Policy
- Is Child Care a Good Public Investment?*
- A Framework for Quality: A European Perspective
- Values & Beliefs in Caring for Babies & Toddlers
- A Framework for Quality: A European Perspective
- The Rights of Young Children
- Statistics Summary: Canadian Early Childhood Care and Education in the 1990's
- Spending on Regulated Child Care under the National Child Benefit

Videotapes

- In the Public Interest: The Benefits of High Quality Child Care*
- Child Care by Design
- Good Child Care, Healthy Child Care

* Indicates item available in French.